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The Echo From the Army - 1863

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THE ECHO FROM THE ARMY.

WHAT OUR SOLDIERS SAY ABOUT THE COPPERHEADS.

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THE ECHO FROM THE ARMY

WHAT OUR SOLDIERS SAY ABOUT THE COPPERHEADS.

There is an old story of an Irishman who complained of the incivility of a famous echo, near the Lakes of Killarney. He shouted: "I've got ye now!" and received, somewhat to his surprise, the reply: "You lie!" The Copperheads of the Northern and Western States have come unexpectedly upon a similar experience. Their cries of treason are echoed back from the army, but the echo is a cry of loyalty, determined and often fierce, which will probably prevent them from tempting fortune in that direction again.

Some little time was needed for our gallant soldiers in the field to awaken to the consciousness that a set of men who had carefully remained at home, were conspiring, with double-dyed treachery, to sell them to the enemy. But now they are awake, and from every direction, from every army, responses come which show that our soldiers are loyal to the core, and not only loyal, but confident in their power to beat both the enemy in their front and the enemy in their rear. In whatever State the copperheads have been at work, from the soldiers of that State come up words of rebuke to sneaking traitors at home, words of devotion to the Union and to lawful liberty. And as in Illinois, Indiana and Ohio these copperheads have been most loud-voiced and active, so from the soldiers of these States we have the most abundant demonstrations of courage and fidelity to our Government.

General Rosecrans, bravest and best, no politician, but a quiet, unostentatious soldier, wrote to the Ohio legislature a letter which Washington might have written in the Revolution. He says:

"I am amazed that any one can think of peace on any terms. He who entertains this sentiment is fit only to be a slave; he who utters it at this time, is, moreover, a traitor to his country, who

deserves the scorn and contempt of all honorable men."

The officers of Ohio regiments in Rosecrans' army had a meeting on the 12th, and adopted a strong address and resolutions against the treasonable peace movement of the copperhead politicians. The resolutions were universally and enthusiastically approved by the Ohio regiments. They say:

"If some miserable demagogues among you must vomit forth their treason, let them keep it at home. We want none of their vile letters, speeches, or papers here. The Army of the West is in terrible earnest. Earnest to conquer and destroy armed rebels. Earnest to meet force with force. Earnest in its hearty detestation of cowardly traitors at home. Earnest in will and power to overcome all who desire the nation's ruin. Ohio's one hundred thousand soldiers in the field, citizens at home, potent in either capacity, ask their fathers, brothers, and friends by their fire-sides and in their peaceful homes to hear and heed this appeal, and to put an end to covert treason at home, more dangerous now to our material existence than the presence of armed hosts of misguided rebels at home."

A correspondent on the ground writes:

"The cheers with which the address was received by the Ohio regiments would have sent a thrill of joy to the heart of every loyal man in the country."

The officers of the One Hundred and Sixteenth Ohio Volunteers held a meeting at Romney, Virginia, on the 10th, in which they resolved:

"That we will hail with feelings of delight the dawnings of peace; but we can think of no peace worth having short of crushing out the rebellion, and the complete restoration of the authority of the Government over every foot of her soil, East, West, North, and South.

"That nothing but an unconditional surrender on the part of the rebels will answer the demand of the true soldier and patriot.

"That we regard the efforts of the copperheads of Ohio to demoralize the army by writing treasonable letters to the soldiers in the field, by urging them to desert their flag, by misrepresenting the Administration and the objects of the war, and by all the means conceived only by traitors, as unworthy American citizens, and more dangerous and heinous than the efforts of armed rebels who meet us in deadly conflict on the battlefield."

"That we will cause to be remembered those cowardly grumblers and traitors, craven spirits, who, instead of aiding us in our noble purpose by their presence in the ranks, are at home aiding and abetting rebels by keeping up a fire in our rear."

"Soldiers of the Fifteenth Corps" write to the *Cincinnati Commercial*, from before Vicksburg:

"We didn't take an oath to fight against traitors in the South alone. No! And we will willingly shoot down traitors in the North, whenever they go too far in their wicked schemes. They have gone far enough now, and their infernal design against our dear Union must be crushed. They may talk about the federal army being tired of war, but they talk about a lie so base that *soldiers* do not notice it. We are in the army, and will remain in it until the American Union rests in peace, triumphant over the rebellious States, and traitors hanged, whether North or South."

Col. Leggett, of the Seventy-eighth Ohio, a bitter democrat, writes:

"I entered the military service to aid in restoring and sustaining the integrity and unity of my Government. For that object I have fought and bled, and for that I am still willing to fight and bleed, and no blunder or mistakes upon the part of the President can justify me in withdrawing from the army, while the enemies of the Government are in arms against it."

From Indiana soldiers, too, there is a cry against Indiana copperheads.

General Milroy (democrat) and his staff write to Indianapolis:

"Any man or set of men, who, in times like these, when our Government is engaged in a deadly struggle for its existence—a struggle which involves not only the fate of free government in our own country, but for all the world—would attempt to disgrace and prostitute the name of democrat by organizing a party under that name to oppose the Government, and divide and distract the people of the loyal States, are traitors much meaner than those in arms who boldly and directly seek the destruction of the Government, for these pretended democrats sneakily and indirectly seek the same end by excit-

ing prejudice against the Government, and division among the people."

General Hovey and his Indiana Colonels stationed at Helena, Arkansas, have issued an address to the democrats of Indiana, warning them against showing favor to the peace plots of schemers. They express themselves with soldierly indignation:

"What! admit that we are whipped? That twenty-three millions of northern men are unequal to nine millions of the South? Shame on the State that would entertain so disgraceful a proposition! Shame upon the democrat who would submit to it, and raise his cowardly voice, and claim that he was an Indian! In this dark hour of our country's trial there is but one road to success and peace, and that is, to be as firmly united for our Government as the rebels are against it. Small differences of opinion amount to nothing in this grand struggle for a nation's existence. Do not place even one straw in the way, and remember that every word you speak to encourage the South nerves the arm that strikes the blow which is aimed at the heart's blood of our brothers and kindred."

They tell their fellow-citizens that

"The rebels of the South are leaning on the northern democracy for support, and it is unquestionably true that unjustifiable opposition to the Administration is giving aid and comfort to 'the enemy.'"

They say:

"The name of democrat, associated with all that is bright and glorious in the history of the past, is being sullied and disgraced by demagogues who are appealing to the lowest prejudices and passions of our people. We have nothing to expect from the South, and nothing to hope without their conquest. They are now using their money freely to subsidize the press and politicians of the North, and with what effect the tone of some of our journals and the speeches of some of our leaders testify."

And they add:

"Indiana's proud and loyal legions number at least seventy thousand effective men in the field, and with one great heart we know that they would repudiate all unholy combinations tending to the dismemberment of our Government."

A soldier writes to the *Chicago Tribune*, from the battle-field of Murfreesboro':

"What else was the *animus* of the Indiana resolutions than a mockery of the memory of the Indiana dead?"

"The first greetings to our great but dearly bought victory at Murfreesboro' were cowardly

cries for 'peace.' While we were gathering together the mutilated bodies of our brave boys, and tenderly placing them in rude fashioned graves in the field where they nobly fell, members of a legislative body in the North were resolving an epitaph for their State's fallen braves, and the sum of their resolving might truthfully be read thus:

"Here Lies a Fellow,
Whose Mistaken Zeal for his Country's Integrity and Honor
Caused him to Unconstitutionally Slay
Our Dear Down-trodden Southern Brethren, in an
Unholy Cause."

A formal address of "The Soldiers of Indiana to the Citizens of Indiana" says:

"We expect to come home some day. We will either come triumphantly rejoicing over the accomplishment of the object for which we have already endured so much, or we will come humiliated and disheartened at our defeat, and the consequent desolation of our country and our homes. In either event we will remember and honor those who have aided and encouraged us by their influence at home, and will visit those who have sought to defeat us with a retribution proportionate to the extent of the evil they have brought upon us and our country."

Colonel C. L. Dunham, commanding the Second Indiana Brigade, writes from Jackson, Tenn., 4th inst., to Governor Morton:

"Vigorous measures must be adopted, or our army, under the influence of the scoundrels and traitors at home who are, by their letters, scattering discontent among our soldiers, will be demoralized and destroyed, and the scourge of this war will, in less than six months, be rolled back upon the fair fields of our glorious Northwest.

"These men know not what they do, and if they expect any general sympathy in the army, they are reckoning without their host."

It is, however, in Illinois, that the copperheads have been busiest in their work of treachery, and it is accordingly from Illinois soldiers that we have the most abundant testimony of unflinching loyalty and determination. Thus, on the 30th of January, a meeting of Illinois officers was called at Corinth, and adopted "resolutions to show to Governor Yates and the other State officers of Illinois, and to all our friends at home, that we are still in favor of the vigorous prosecution of the war, and that we will uphold our President and Governor in all their efforts to put down this rebellion."

The third resolution reads thus:

"Resolved, That we have watched the traitor-

ous conduct of those members of the legislature of the state of Illinois, who, misrepresenting their constituency, have been proposing a cessation of the war, avowedly to arrange terms of peace, but really to give time for the exhausted rebels to recover strength and renew their plotting to divest Governor Yates of the rights and authority vested in him by our State constitution and laws; and to them we calmly and firmly say: *Beware of the terrible retribution that is falling upon your coadjutors at the South, and that as your crime is tenfold blacker, it will swiftly smite you with tenfold more horror, should you persist in your damnable deeds of treason.*"

And the fifth reads thus:

"Resolved, That we hold in detestation and will ever execrate any man who, in this struggle for our national life, offers factious opposition to either the federal or state authorities, in their efforts or measures for the vigorous prosecution of the war for the suppression of this godless rebellion."

On motion, it was decided to have a copy of the resolutions sent to the commanding officer of each Illinois regiment in the district, to be read at dress parade, and to be voted upon by the men of each regiment.

Certificates from the commanding officers of the Seventh, Eighth, Ninth, Twelfth, Fiftieth, Fifty-second, Fifty-seventh, Sixty-second, and Sixty-sixth Illinois regiments show that the resolutions were thus read and unanimously adopted by the men.

At a meeting of the officers of the Sixty-second Illinois regiment, Colonel James M. True in the chair, this resolution was adopted:

"Resolved, That we denounce the wickedness and baseness of those citizens of the North who, by disloyal speeches and otherwise, impart confidence and hope to rebels in arms against their Government; who encourage Union soldiers to desert, and threaten armed resistance to their recovery; and who, by letters, speeches, or acts, endeavor to promote disaffection in the army, the last hope of the nation; that we appeal to our fathers, our brothers, and our friends at home, to discountenance, oppose, and put down those base and infamous wretches, who, while breathing the free air of Illinois, sympathize with treason and denounce the government which has given them peace and security, with liberty, from their childhood, now struggling almost in a death agony, and who, from motives of ambition, or for their own personal aggrandizement or advantage, would lend their aid, however indirectly, to reduce Illinois to the unhappy situation of the rebel south

ern states, the seat of blighting and desolating war."

At another meeting of Illinois troops, a series of resolutions were adopted, of which this is one:

"Resolved, That we hereby proclaim to the world our undying love of the Union of States, and, at the same time, our eternal and everlasting abhorrence for traitors, whether found in armed rebellion at the South, or in disloyal conventions and legislatures North."

From the Forty-sixth Illinois regiment, stationed at Moscow, Tennessee, comes the following, in a letter to the Dixon (Illinois) *Telegraph*, dated January 29:

"We hate those villains and traitors who are afraid that the rebels will be hurt or deprived of their property, and would rather shoot them than southern traitors. We are surprised that men should be allowed to put forth such resolutions as those lately passed in Springfield, and if the black-hearted cowards who put them forth think they have friends in the army, they are sadly deceived. Dark and dispiriting as the future looks, we are still ready to fight traitors; and when those in the South are put down, we want a chance at those detestable and cowardly ones in the North. General Grant's army was never in better fighting trim than at present, and if the traitors of Illinois will come down here, it will do its utmost to exterminate them with their brother rebels."

The Thirteenth Illinois, from their camp in the field before Vicksburg, sent a bugle blast against the peace traitors at home, under date of February 10th. They specifically range themselves on the side of the President, though they say many of them opposed his election, and they add:

"That we firmly and cordially endorse the President's Proclamation emancipating the slaves of rebels, thereby depriving them of one of their greatest elements of strength, and we will, to the best of our ability, aid in the execution and enforcement of the same.

"That any person or newspaper uttering or publishing opinions that the army of Illinois, in the field, are anxious to quit the service and return to their homes on account of the policy of the President, utter his or their own sentiments, which we consider disloyal, and a libel upon the feelings of the army.

"That we are unconditionally opposed to any armistice or convention having for its object any compromise or settlement of the difficulties now existing between the United States and the traitors in arms, except on unconditional submission to the laws which they have without cause so wickedly violated."

The following was adopted unanimously (except one vote) and enthusiastically by Col. Niles's regiment, the One Hundred and Thirtieth Illinois, at Fort Pickering, Memphis, on the 11th of February:

"Resolved, That we, soldiers of Illinois, in arms in the face of the enemy, have nothing now to do with politics, or political discussions, nor any desire to mingle in them; we wish and intend to do our duty as soldiers. With the policy of the Administration and its head, Abraham Lincoln, our Commander-in-Chief, we have nothing to do. Our oaths bind us to obey his orders and the orders of the officers appointed over us, and to bear true allegiance to the United States. Our oaths we will keep, so help us God! But while we deny not the right and duty of political discussion to those who have the time and opportunity therefore, we protest with all the energy and vehemence of our natures, and with all the patriotism of our hearts we inveigh and protest against surrender or retreat, and against any armistice, or truce, or peace, or compromise, with traitors in arms; and we here solemnly resolve that we will hold that man as a traitor and an eternal enemy to us, to our children, and to our country, who shall propose, or has proposed, any settlement by which the rebellion shall be screened from just punishment, and the country and her defenders cheated of the fruits of past victories and present triumph. Our labors, blood, and treasures shall not be spent in vain."

General John A. Logan, of Illinois, a democrat of the straitest sect, when he heard of the action of the Illinois Legislature, wrote:

"Tell them up North for me that we can whip the rebels, and are going to do it; and when we are done, we are to return home. When we get there we shall yet be strong enough to summarily punish any secession sympathizers, or peace preachers that we may be able to find in our way."

Colonel Frank Sherman wrote on the 14th instant, from the Camp on Stone river, Tennessee:

"Let the disunionists of the North take heed. We do not propose quietly to allow them to trample on our rights, and help to dig our graves. What we expect and look for is that men will not long be allowed to utter traitors' sentiments at our homes; that there is true patriotism enough left to save the country, and rub out traitors of all degrees at home, in the guise of loyalty, to whatever party they may belong. Every officer and soldier that I have talked with in regard to our duty, agrees with me; that we will sustain, to the death, our Commander-in-Chief, the Presi-

dent of the United States, in all measures and orders that he may issue for the crushing of the rebellion in the southern states."

"G. H., Co. A, 2d Illinois Cavalry," writes from Memphis, February 7th, about the copperheads:

"I say that all such men ought to be made to leave the country or be hung. This is the way the southerners do, even with harmless Union men in the South, and sure our cause is much more valuable than theirs. I say as General Hurlbut said in his late speech, 'that the copperheads create a very bad influence on our glorious army.' I say they ought, at least, to be made to hold their tongues, even if it cost a 'free fight' in the North. I think that a great injustice was done when the army was not allowed to vote in the different elections since the commencement of this war. Through this the traitors of the North are daily venturing to show themselves."

An officer in General Rosecrans' army, says:

"Woe betide the secession sympathizers and would-be peacemakers when the army get through with their present work on hand. The sufferings, deprivations, and hardships of soldier-life, are not so easily endured, and the cause we are fighting for is too dear to be broken down by the cowards and stay-at-homes who brought on the war, and now place every impediment in the way of having accomplished what must be the inevitable result—the subjugation of the rebellion. Curses loud and deep go out every day from men and officers, and they are not to be lightly thought of. Now and then you can hear the names of some marked men, whose life or lives are pledged for a rope or bullet. All in good time and they will get them."

Of the feeling in the army of General Rosecrans, a correspondent of the *St. Louis Democrat* writes:

"I have made it my business to talk with and find out the general sentiment of the army in regard to this new phase of disloyalty, and on no subject have I found the whole army so unanimous as in their bitter denunciation of such traitors as Goudy and Merrick, and the rest of the party that organized that traitorous meeting in the very capital of the State which has sent its hundred and fifty thousand men to fight the battles of the government. Officers and men denounce them alike. I have heard hundreds of men say that the war on secessionists was not (with them) confined to the South; that here they had acquired the habit of destroying the property and taking the lives of traitors, and that they did

not think they could leave off the habit when they got home."

In Leavenworth, Kansas, the brave General Blunt made a speech on the 14th inst., in which he said:

"Fellow-citizens: I have some little respect for a man who believes his cause to be just, and who fights to sustain it. But the most detestable men on earth are the consummate cowards who lack the courage to shoulder the musket and go inside the rebel lines, but who stay at home and fire in the rear of the men who are defending your homes and your country."

"I have yet to see the first soldier who is tired of this war, or disposed to end it without the unconditional submission of the rebels. [Applause.] The men are all right, and they are not at all fastidious about having the nigger to help them. Wherever I have heard any objection to rebels being killed by negroes, I have always noticed that it came from some fool in shoulder-straps."

And no sooner is a copperhead nominated for Governor in Connecticut than Connecticut soldiers begin to speak out.

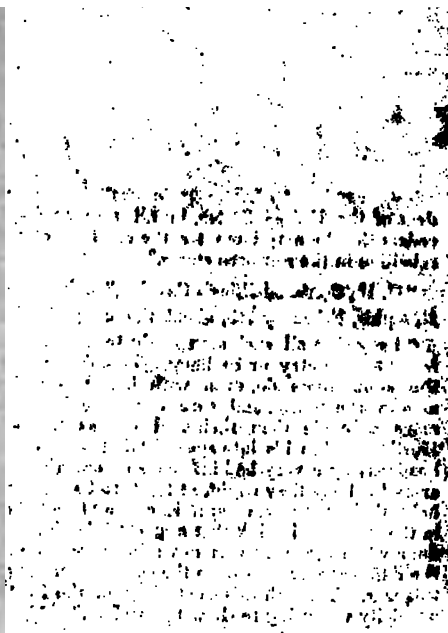
A letter from Colonel William G. Ely, of the Eighteenth Connecticut regiment, denounces the copperheads of his native State.

"I am surprised that the people of Connecticut are becoming contaminated with the fickle and cowardly spirit now manifested in various sections. Let the people of the North shrink from the contest in which we are now engaged, and bitter will be their disappointment."

"In place of thanks from the thousands of soldiers now in the field, for the withdrawal of their support to this war, the curses of the brave will ring in their ears, demanding: Why do you insult us by doubting our ability? What revenge have we for our comrades slain?"

The following extract from a private letter written by a member of company H, Twelfth Connecticut regiment, to a friend in Collinsville, puts the matter in its true light:

"Have you any secesh scamps among you who are prating of compromise? If you have, do, for God's sake, give them a rifle, and turn them over to Jeff. Davis, for they cannot then do the harm they are doing now. There is no one who desires peace more than I do, but as long as the rebels are in arms, and as long as any flag other than the stars and stripes waves in this country, I say fight them!"





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